

Dartmouth Spinning Company (Sutherland Mill), 1886
510 Cottage Street
Augusta
Richmond County
Georgia

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

DARTMOUTH SPINNING COMPANY (SUTHERLAND MILL)

HAER GA-6

Location: 510 Cottage Street
Augusta, Georgia
Richmond County
UTM:
Quad:

Date of Construction: 1886

Present Owner: Graniteville Company
Graniteville, South Carolina

Present Use: Houses the Waste Division of the Graniteville Company.

Significance: One of two yarn mills built on the banks of the Augusta Canal, the Dartmouth Mill still stands as one of the few remaining physical examples of Augusta's quest to become the "Lowell of the South." Architecturally, the mill represents the only remaining cotton mill in Augusta which has retained its original character by not bricking up its windows, thus retaining the visual relationship between the interior and exterior.

Historian: Robert C. Jorgensen, 1977

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DARTMOUTH SPINNING COMPANY

Eleven years after the enlargement of the Augusta Canal it was still felt that proper care and promotion would continue to make the canal Augusta's largest wealth producing element. [1] Therefore, satisfaction was publicly expressed in the Augusta Chronicle when Edward H. Coates of Philadelphia decided to build a yarn mill on the canal's first level, below the Enterprise Manufacturing Company [2], further adding to the prosperity of the community. It differed from the existing mills in that no Augusta capital was invested in it. [3] The Dartmouth Spinning Company was incorporated in 1886 with a capital of \$100,000. [4]

Charles A. Maxwell, later to become Augusta's city engineer in 1893, performed the duties of architect, drawing up the plans and supervising the mill's construction during 1886. By mid-November, construction was nearing completion; only the coffer dam and machinery installation remained unfinished. Thomas Lynch served as the contractor with the brickwork contracted for by the Bricklayers' Union. [5] The three-story building (this included the partial basement) was valued at \$150,000.

One hundred workers, earning a total annual wage of \$25,000, manufactured only yarns, the sizes ranging from number 8 to number 26. The factory's annual production had a value of \$150,000. Charles Maxwell stayed on as the mill's general manager after its completion, Charles Claghorn acted as president, and Edward H. Coates and Company of

Philadelphia were selling agents. [6]

MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT

"...No mill is more perfectly built and equipped than the Dartmouth Yarn Mill," [7] bragged the Augusta Chronicle in 1887, and indeed it did house fine machinery. The second floor (Photo No. 1) contained the spinning, spooling, and twisting operations, 9,100 spindles, one pair of mules, a spooling machine, and a twister located there. The spinning equipment was operated by an 18-inch belt wrapping around a gigantic overhead pulley (Photo No. 2), which in turn was driven by the main driving in the narrow belt way.

Twenty Whittin self-stripping cards were placed in the carding room, the main room on the first floor (Photo No. 3). Also on this level were 15 40-inch English self-stripping roller cards of two heads, four drawing frames, three slubbers, one intermediate and six fine frames, along with the warping and bailing operations. The basement contained a machine shop and later warping and winding operations. An automatic sprinkler system was connected with a 6,000-gallon water tank in the central tower. The mill also had public telephone connections.

POWER SYSTEM

Water was channelled through an underground flume from the first level to the wheel pit. It was then discharged into a covered tailrace, becoming exposed at the northeast corner of the mill, and finally emptied its contents into the canal's second level. A 200-horsepower double turbine wheel made by R. Wood and Company of Philadelphia was

housed in the wheelhouse. The main shafts of the mill building were connected with this power source by 30-inch-wide belting, manufactured by the Hoyt Seather Belting Company, running a distance of 50 feet (Photo No. 2). [8] The company operated its own dynamos, the power being obtained from the turbines, and was lighted by the United States electric light.

Inspection of the site and examination of fire insurance maps leads the author to assume that by 1904 the mill no longer used hydro-mechanical power but was buying electricity from a power company. [9] The headgates are the only existing evidence that indicate the mill did use water power at one time; the tailrace is completely covered.

ADDITIONS AND ALTERATIONS

The original mill building (Photo No. 4) consisted of two floors, a basement beneath the northeast half of the structure, and a one-story picker house at the southeast end. The wheelhouse was connected to the mill building by a narrow corridor which served as the belt way. By 1890, a single-story cotton warehouse at the western property line, a four-bay one-story cotton warehouse north of it, and a two-story office addition on the southwest side of the water tank had been constructed. [10] The machine shop had been relocated on the site of the old wheelhouse, a waste house was constructed east of the large cotton warehouse, and a box house was built near the end of the tailrace by 1904. [11] By 1923 a large one-story addition with a basement had been constructed at the northeast end of the main mill, covering part of the tailrace.

A waste picker, a waste house adjacent to the large cotton warehouse, and another addition to the offices adjoining the water tank tower were constructed, all one story in height. Today the only buildings standing are the main mill building, its several additions, and the large cotton warehouse.

ARCHITECTURE

The present architectural significance of the mill building lies not in its design qualities per se, but in the Sibley, Enterprise, and King mills' default to it as being the only remaining mill with windows intact, thus retaining the relationship between the interior and exterior and its original character. The old mill's facade takes on a rhythm of solid-void-solid-void as the engaged piers and windows alternate across it. The additions to the main mill have kept this rhythm flowing and have used similar segmental arches in the door and window openings as well as in the ornamental brickwork in the cornice. Wood brackets support narrow eaves on a shallow pitched roof on the main building; the newer addition sports a parapet wall, some of which is not now present, rising above the roof which is capped by a monitor. The stair and water tank tower spring above the roofline and project out from the building as the central focal point on the front facade. The first two floors of the tower have segmental arched openings for double doors and a hoisting bar embedded above the second floor door to lift objects up to that level. The tower also exhibits simple ornamental brickwork on the cornice. (Photo No. 4.)

The main building was originally symmetric about the tower, each wing having 10-1/2 bays. The ends were six bays wide, and, although the southwestern end of the two-story structure does not have exterior engaged piers, the one-story picker house carries on the rhythm. The clutter of additions have ruined the symmetry of the facades, but the character of the original 19th-century mill is retained more here than at the other mills because the windows were not bricked in.

LATER HISTORY

The national financial panic of 1893 claimed Dartmouth Spinning Company as one of its victims. On March 19, 1895, the company was reincorporated as the Sutherland Manufacturing Company. [12] It had a capital of \$35,000 with the capability to increase its capital stock to \$500,000.

Graniteville Company of Craniteville, South Carolina, bought the mill in the 1940's and retained the name Sutherland. It is the company's waste division, and its main function is the baling and storage of cotton waste.

The Dartmouth mill was able to make the transition from an industrious yarn mill to a waste factory where no machines were producing goods without suffering the fate of other mills--lying vacant, victims of vandalism, and waiting for the final blow of the wrecking ball.

Footnotes

1. Augusta Chronicle, 7 February 1886.
2. Historic American Engineering Record, Augusta Canal Project, Report Number 2, Enterprise Manufacturing Company.
3. Augusta Chronicle, 9 October 1886.
4. The incorporators were Charles E. Claghorn, William F. Herring, Edward H. Coates, Joseph H. Coates, Charles A. Maxwell, and George M. Crane. Augusta Chronicle, 29 June 1886.
5. Augusta Chronicle, 29 June 1886, 13 November 1886, 9 October 1887.
6. Augusta Chronicle, 9 October 1886.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. After studying the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps for 1890 and 1904, I feel that the wheelhouse was raised, the turbine pit covered with concrete and addition built on its site. The brick coursing, ornamental work, and window openings do not have the consistency and continuity one expects to find if the two parts had been constructed at the same time.
10. It is possible that the warehouses were built at the same time as the main mill building.
11. See footnote no. 9.
12. The incorporators of this reorganization were Edward H. Coates, Robert L. Bloomfield, Charles E. Riley, Harrison B. Schell, Linwood C. Hayne, Jesse Thompson, and William T. Davidson. Charters 1889-1900, pp. 300-303, in the office of the Richmond County Superior Court's clerk.

Selected Bibliography

Augusta Chronicle, 9 October 1886.

This was the most extensive and detailed source of information on the mill. Several other small articles during the year 1886 were helpful also. Most other secondary sources draw upon this article for their information.

Sanborn Fire Insurance maps for the years 1890, 1904, and 1923 were beneficial in establishing the approximate times additions were constructed.